



الصندوق الدولي للحفاظ على الحبارى
International Fund For Houbara Conservation



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

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2020-2021 /





With God's will, we shall continue to work to protect our environment and our wildlife, as did our forefathers before us. It is a duty, and if we fail, our children, rightly, will reproach us for squandering an essential part of their inheritance, and of our heritage.

SHEIKH ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN

THE FOUNDING FATHER OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



A development that does not integrate the cultural dimension is not sustainable... Based on this, the state pays attention to heritage as a 'national treasure', a linchpin of identity and a source of social cohesion.

THE LATE SHEIKH KHALIFA BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN



The successes and achievements of the past five decades are a source of pride for us all. The path to this success was never easy. It took a lot of effort and perseverance and was reinforced by ambition, work and planning. This needs to be understood by the new generation because they are the ones who will carry the flag in the future and will bear the trust of the nation that our parents and grandparents left for us.

H.H. SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



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INTRODUCING THE FUND



Abu Dhabi's efforts to conserve the houbara began in the 1970s. They were led by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, recognised for his work in protecting the environment and efforts to preserve wildlife. Subsequently, his vision for the houbara was transformed into a programme that is considered a global leader in species conservation.

Since the first houbara chicks were bred in captivity in the 1980s, more than 500,000 birds have been produced, with the majority used to sustain wild populations of the species in countries across their distribution.

Today, all of Abu Dhabi's efforts to conserve the houbara are managed by the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC), which was established in 2006 to oversee the full scope of the programme by bringing together all of its elements and securing a sustainable future for the bird in the wild for future generations to enjoy.

We currently manage four conservation breeding centres: the National Avian Research Center (NARC) in Sweihan, the Sheikh Khalifa Houbara Breeding Centre (SKHBC-AD) at Seih Al Salem (both in Abu Dhabi), the Emirates Center for Wildlife Propagation (ECWP) in Missouri/Enjil, Morocco, and the Sheikh Khalifa Houbara Breeding Centre in Kazakhstan (SKHBC-KZ). We also work with the countries throughout the houbara bustards' range to implement conservation actions on the ground as well as ecological research.

Our strategy remains true to Sheikh Zayed's vision, and our commitment is as strong as his passion for conservation. We define our model as 'Preventive Intervention': acting proactively to redress imbalances. This is based on 6 strategic pillars:



Wild Reserves
Protection of important ecosystems so the species can flourish.



Legislation–Regulation–Enforcement
Effective legal and regulatory framework to sustain the houbara in the wild, while maintaining cultural heritage.



Sustained Breeding & Release
Continuous scientific research rendered into groundbreaking breeding and release programmes.



International Affairs
Strengthened partnerships across range countries.



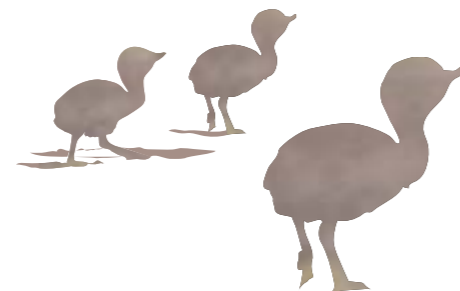
Culture & Heritage
Code of conduct for falconry that sustains culture and wild houbara populations.



Education
An educational programme that provides the tools to benefit future leaders in conservation.

We have already achieved great successes, including securing the species' genetic integrity in captivity and reaching a significant number of captive-bred birds. However, much remains to be done in order to achieve our ultimate goal of establishing viable wild populations of houbara across their distribution.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



Abu Dhabi's Houbara Conservation Programmes established by the Founding Father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan more than 40 years ago continue, and we have been able to attain great achievements that enhance Abu Dhabi's status and its leading role in protecting and preserving the environment and wildlife at the national, regional and global levels.

In a recent and significant development at the operational level of activities and centres specialised in the conservation of houbara, this year's production has exceeded 82,000 Asian and North African Houbara, of which more than 69,000 were prepared for release to restore the houbara population and the sustainable use of natural resources.

This year has been exceptional for the center in Kazakhstan as our production doubled to 18,520 Asian Houbara compared to 9,086 in 2020, a matter which reinforced our confidence that we will be able to boost the numbers of migratory houbara in the wild if we join forces in the breeding centres with the countries across the species range and wintering grounds. Our attention will be focused on consolidating cooperation with the range countries and engaging with them in the houbara conservation efforts, which will help with the fulfillment of their responsibilities towards the success of these efforts, achieving the envisaged benefits to the UAE and the local communities, as well as the fulfillment of the international obligations and activation of agreements and memoranda of understanding signed with the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC). As part of IFHC's Global Conference Series, we organised a three-day virtual scientific conference that drew the participation of a large number of government

officials, researchers, scientists, educators and NGOs to discuss the challenges and solutions to houbara conservation. Our partnership with the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment was also strengthened by hosting a dialogue on the illegal trade in houbara and falcons on the sidelines of Expo 2020, thus providing a regional forum to review the status of illegal trade of falcons and houbara, highlight region-specific challenges, and formulate specific recommendations to tackle the illegal trade and ensure the survival of species. We also participated in the NYU-Abu Dhabi seminar series with two papers on the impact of transport and migration on reproduction and the role of genetic research in the conservation of houbara. Fund researchers have delivered more than 20 presentations over the past year to scientists and policymakers from around the world.

Underscoring our role in preparing future leaders and introducing them to their tasks in wildlife conservation and sustainability, we have successfully doubled the number of students benefiting from the 'Conservation Education: the Houbara Model' programme, and developed its digital platforms to allow students to learn anytime and anywhere. Innovative competitions and events that received wide attention and participation continued, with 60 schools participating in the short story challenge won by 15 schools to coincide with the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the International Fund for Houbara Conservation. Three hundred students attended the workshops in which scientists from the Fund spoke about their scientific research, followed by a competition on the contents of the workshops with the participation of 1,700 students. Around 5,380 students from winter camp goes also participated in a virtual reading competition. At the same time, we have worked to develop the 'Houbara Model' for the undergraduate level, and to start experimenting with two modified versions thereof for the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Kazakhstan, in preparation for the production of more



international versions in cooperation with our partners in other countries in the houbara range.

As successive years present even more challenges, we affirm that the International Fund for Houbara Conservation will continue to advance towards its goal of preserving our culture and national heritage for future generations by ensuring a sustainable future for the houbara, its natural habitats and associated wildlife.

Best regards

THEYAB BIN MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR HOUBARA CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS



Despite the restrictions on international travel, 2021 was a year of incredible progress marked by new records in terms of production and breakthroughs in breeding additional species.

More than 82,000 houbara chicks of both the Asian (*Chlamydotis macqueenii*) and North African species (*Chlamydotis undulata*) were produced in the 2021 breeding season, with over 69,000 made available for conservation efforts.

2021



Asian & North African Houbara
82,369
BRED

Production of Asian houbara in Kazakhstan in 2021 more than double that of the previous year, with 18,520 chicks produced compared to 9,093 in 2020. Houbara production in the UAE reached a new record of 43,162 chicks in 2021 (compared to 37,394 in 2020), of which 41,176 were the Asian and 1,986 of the North African species.

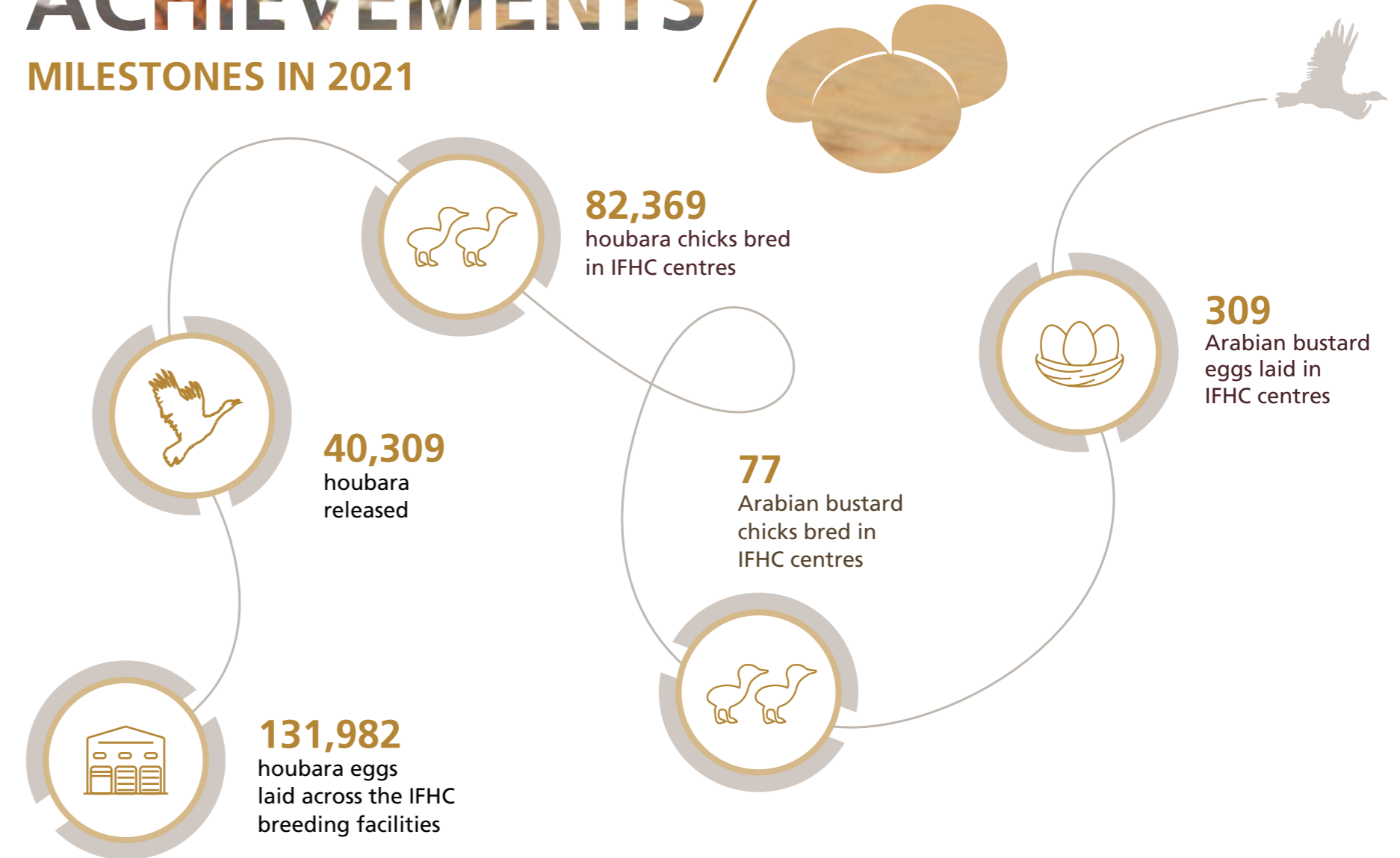
A total of 77 Arabian bustard (*Ardeotis arabs*) chicks were hatched, confirming production capacity and improving knowledge of the species. Furthermore, our centre in Morocco benefitted from a remarkable season with respect to captive breeding. In addition to the 20,687 African houbara chicks produced, 3,112 chicks of black-bellied sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*) and 1,525 of Eurasian stone-curlew (*Burhinus oedicnemus*) were produced in 2021 (compared to 2,847 and 1,031 respectively in 2020). The ECWP also produced 283 falcon (*Falco* sp.) chicks in 2021.





MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

MILESTONES IN 2021



CONSERVATION PROGRESS AND SCIENTIFIC UPDATES



2020-2021

With respect to the Fund's flagship species, the houbara bustards, 59,696 Asian houbara were successfully bred with 2,951 kept as breeders and 50,088 made available for conservation efforts. In addition, a total of 22,673 North African houbara chicks were produced with 900 made available as breeders and 18,947 for conservation efforts.

Asian Houbara
59,696
BRED



2,951 | **50,088**
BREEDERS | CONSERVATION

African Houbara
22,673
BRED



900 | **18,947**
BREEDERS | CONSERVATION



RANGE-WIDE ACTIVITIES

Production and Conservation Numbers in 2021

Across our conservation breeding centres in the UAE, Morocco, and Kazakhstan, the number of eggs processed from the breeder flocks of both species of houbara bustard during the 2021 season totalled 131,982, of which 82,369 were successfully reared. Of these, 3,851 were retained as breeders, while 69,035 were used for conservation efforts.

Houbara Conservation Efforts in 2021

During 2021, a total of 60,311 houbara bustards were used from our breeding programme to support conservation efforts. Of these, 20,002 were used for indirect and 40,309 for direct conservation efforts. The birds were provided from all three of our breeding centres as follows: 29,116 from the HBC-AD in the UAE, 18,537 from the ECWP in Morocco, and 12,658 from the SKHBC-KZ in Kazakhstan.

Research Studies and Fieldwork

Our researchers actively participated in several international virtual conferences in 2021, making twenty presentations to scientists and policymakers worldwide.



NYU Seminar Series

Two of our researchers made virtual presentations as part of the New York University Abu Dhabi's (NYUAD) seminar series in 2021. In October, Joseph Azar made a presentation titled *Carryover effect of migration on Asian houbara breeding performances in Central Asia*. In November, Thierry Hoareau presented *The role of genetics in conservation: A case study of the houbara bustards*.



Advanced Research in Bustard Ecology and Conservation

As part of the Fund's Global Conservation Series of conferences, we organised a virtual three-day forum as a platform for government officials, researchers, scientists, educators, and NGOs to discuss challenges and solutions for bustard conservation. In addition, the conference offered an opportunity to strengthen connections among bustard scientists and other conservationists and develop further international cooperation for securing the future of bustards.

Forums such as this are crucial as they not only highlight the difficulties associated with global population declines, but also generate ideas about overcoming them and improving conservation. The conference touched on topics such as bustard translocation, demography, breeding biology, captive population management, as well as methods of conservation and research.



Regional Dialogue on the Illegal Trade of Houbara and Falcons

Co-hosted by the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA) and the IFHC, the *Regional Dialogue on the Illegal Trade of Houbara and Falcons* provided a platform to

review the status of illegal trade of falcons and houbara, highlight challenges specific to the region, and formulate recommendations for tackling smuggling and ensuring the survival of the species. In addition, the dialogue sought to drive concerted regional efforts to protect, breed, and regulate the trade of these emblematic bird species.

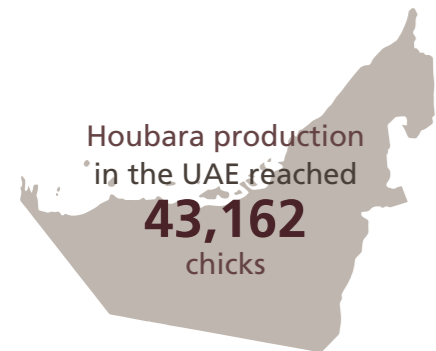
The forum drew the participation of representatives from environment ministries and authorities in the region, the administrative authority of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in the UAE, as well as elite conservation scientists and experts. Ecologists from the Fund made presentations on illegal trade and our approach to sustainability. As part of the regional dialogue, we sought to establish a regional working group to develop and implement a unified approach to protect falcons and houbara and preserve Arabian falconry traditions.

Fieldwork in 2021

Our routine work in the field to study the houbara bustards continued in 2021; This year's studies uncovered 7 Asian houbara nests in the UAE, while 39 were found in Kazakhstan. For the North African subspecies, 824 nests were found in Morocco.

A number of field censuses were also conducted this year. In the UAE, 637 Asian houbara individuals were counted in two separate studies, with 308 individuals counted in March and 329 in September in different areas across the country. Studies were also carried out in Morocco and Kazakhstan. A count of displaying males identified 128 individuals in Morocco and 225 in Kazakhstan. In addition, a census carried out after the breeding season identified 795 North African houbara in Morocco and 219 Asian houbara in Kazakhstan.

ECOLOGY UPDATES



UAE

Our two facilities, the National Avian Research Center (NARC) and the Sheikh Khalifa Houbara Breeding Centre

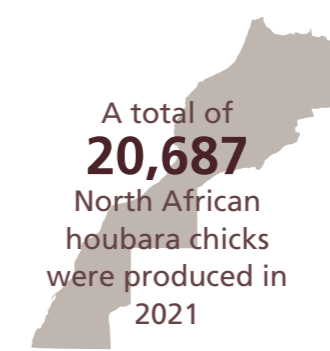
Abu Dhabi (SKHBC-AD), produced a record number of houbara chicks in 2021: Production reached 43,162 chicks (compared to 37,394 in 2020), of which 41,176 were of the Asian and 1,986 of the North African species.

This year also saw work continuing on the construction of a new holding site at Al Marzoum, which will be able to host more than 10,000 birds once operational.



KAZAKHSTAN

The Sheikh Khalifa Houbara Breeding Centre Kazakhstan (SKHBC-KZ) in Shayan is one of the most important centres for the future of the Asian houbara, as the country constitutes the breeding ground for the majority of the global Asian houbara migratory population. In 2021, we produced over 18,000 Asian houbara chicks, meaning that we surpassed our original capacity target of 15,000 chicks bred annually for the first time.



MOROCCO

The Emirates Center for Wildlife Propagation (ECWP), based in Missouri, continued to breed North African houbara.

A total of 20,687 North African houbara chicks were produced in 2021, with almost 18,000 used in conservation efforts. In addition, the ECWP enjoyed great success in the captive breeding of other species of steppic birds, including 3,112 black-bellied sandgrouse, 1,525 Eurasian stone-curlew and 283 falcon chicks.



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS



International cooperation is a key strategic objective of the IFHC. As the leader in houbara bustard conservation, the Fund engages with most of the countries across the extensive range of the two species of houbara bustard and continues to expand its international collaborations securing shared objectives, involvement, and ownership for houbara conservation across the range.

In addition to the countries where we conduct releases, our formal collaborations in 2021 spanned China, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the USA, and Yemen. In 2022, we renewed our collaboration agreements with China and Russia, and launched two significant conservation projects with Israel and Russia. These will further our objective to secure a long-term sustainable future for the houbara.

We also maintain scientific collaborations with 21 universities and institutions across 11 countries.





ISRAEL NATURE AND HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Following the landmark signing of a 2020 Memorandum of Understanding with the Israel Nature and Heritage Foundation (INHF), we launched a major five-year plan to study and conserve the Asian houbara in Israel.

Initially, the research will focus on developing a better understanding of the genetic status of the remnant houbara population in Israel. The scientists of the Fund and the INHF will work together to explore and evaluate the existence of local species adaptations, investigate the genetic structure of the population and its potential differentiation from other populations across the range, as well as study the genetic status, genetic diversity and potential inbreeding levels of the remnant population. Following the initial studies, the Fund will provide recommendations for adequate conservation measures.

Building on the genetic study, the collaboration will expand the scope of the research project to include population distribution and density, breeding and survival rates, habitat quality, and movement through data tracking, to assess local houbara populations and habitat use. In addition, this analysis will allow the assessment and identification of movement corridors between the breeding and wintering areas of the species.

UBSUNUR BASIN NATURAL BIOSPHERIC SANCTUARY, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

In 2021, the Fund signed a five-year agreement with the Russian Federation's Ubsunur Basin Natural Biospheric Sanctuary to study the Asian houbara and great bustard (*Otis tarda*) populations in the Uvs Lake Basin in order to work together on restoration activities to conserve both species classified as vulnerable.

The Uvs Lake Basin adjoins the territories of Mongolia and the Tuva Republic in the Russian Federation. It constitutes the northernmost part of the global range of the Asian houbara and includes part of the range of the great bustard. Our conservation experts will join colleagues in the sanctuary to conduct field studies and research in order to confirm the presence of a remnant breeding population of the Asian houbara bustard and assess the status (demographic and genetic levels) of that of the great bustard. Subsequently, we will work together to devise and implement a strategy to conserve the populations of both species and their habitats in the region.

15-YEAR ANNIVERSARY



In 2021, we celebrated our fifteen-year anniversary, and the number 15 became a key element in our work this year.

SHORT STORY CHALLENGE

We launched a national competition during the 2020/21 academic year in collaboration with the UAE's Ministry of Education (MoE). Working in teams, students in schools across the UAE were asked to write short stories on what they had learned about the houbara and sustainability issues based on one of three subjects: the Significance of the Houbara in Emirati Culture, the Role of an Ecologist, and Conservation of a Desert Species and its Threats. To promote collaboration and creativity, the teams included writers, editors, and illustrators.

Eighty schools from across the UAE participated in the competition, with 60 schools submitting entries, of which 30 were shortlisted. The 15 winning teams, which were chosen to represent the 15 years since the formation of the IFHC, were announced at ADIHEX 2021. The prize for the winners was seeing their stories, along with their illustrations, published in a book: *Stories from Our Environment*.



15 VOICES

A special video, *15 Voices*, kicked off the year with stakeholders, community members, and the IFHC employees sharing messages of what the Fund means to them. From preserving heritage to the importance of nature in balance and sustainability, the video is a story of Emirati success and hope for the future.



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To celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the founding of the UAE, fifty students released fifty captive-bred houbara carrying rings decorated with the UAE flag and the logo of the 50th year in various emirates across the country.

NATIONAL BIRD RELEASE CELEBRATING UAE'S 50TH NATIONAL DAY

'A Unified House' – the release was attended by various government entities from other emirates, including: the Environment Protection and Development Authority, Ras Al Khaimah, the Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Sharjah, the Sharjah City Municipality, the Department of Tourism and Archaeology, Umm Al Quwain and the Fujairah Environment Authority, as well as the UAE Falcons Federation.

The event symbolised the importance of preserving the heritage and natural resources of the UAE, along with reinforcing the country's values in the younger generation. It also encapsulated our integrated conservation approach, combining scientific research, education and awareness, community engagement, protection measures, and captive breeding and release projects.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION: THE HOUBARA MODEL



Despite the challenges faced in 2021 with the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Fund continued to expand its education programme in line with the UAE's objective to create the conservation leaders of tomorrow to take forward the country's agenda for long-term environmental sustainability.



55,000

Students engaged with gamifications tools.

Accessible to all students in UAE

THE HOUBARA MODEL

The Houbara Model is an innovative programme that uses the houbara as a flagship species for educational content to explore issues around sustainability and heritage, and develop the UAE's future conservationists. After making education our sixth strategic pillar in 2017, we launched a pilot programme in Abu Dhabi, which was subsequently developed into a full model programme officially adopted into the UAE's national curriculum in 2020.

The programme is based on a dynamic framework— a complex interplay of three primary practices attempting to capture conservation education's essential qualities. The three primary practices interact to create synergies that aim to raise awareness of current global sustainability issues, promote positive attitudes towards the environment, and inspire constructive change in how we interact with the natural world. With learning experiences embedded into the MoE's curriculum, students get access to multidisciplinary learning units that have been created with gamification elements. The learning platform collects and stores users' data, providing important information on the effectiveness of the learning experiences.



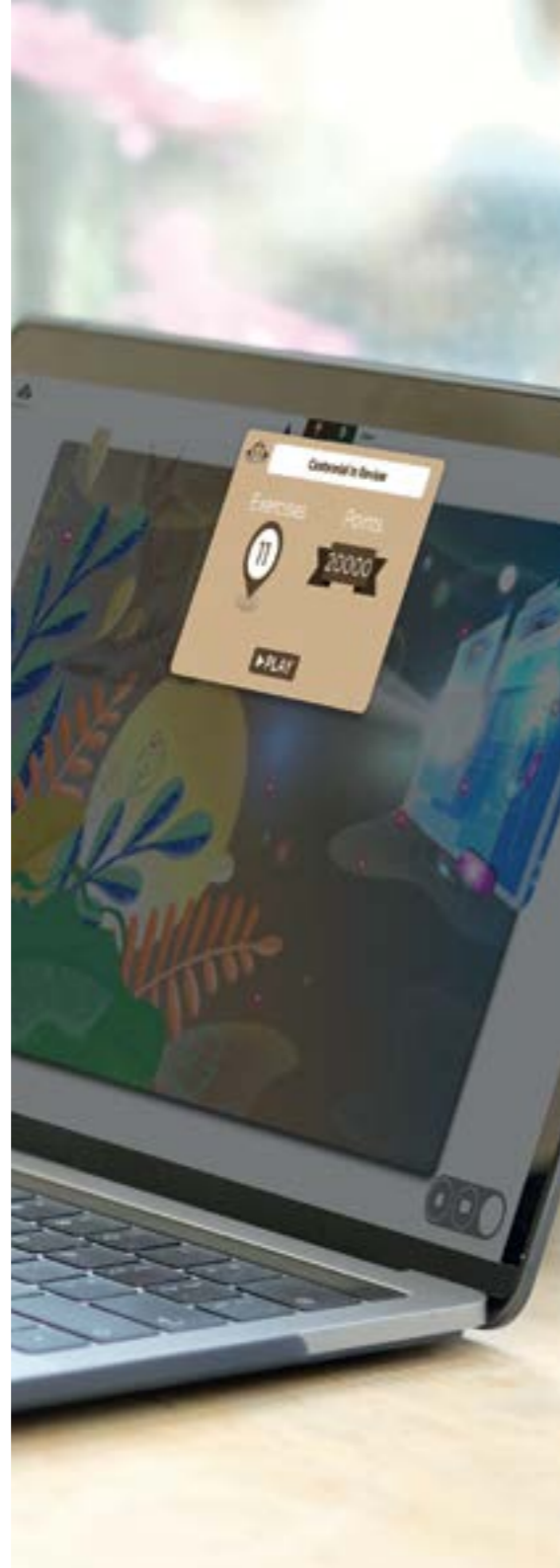
Meanwhile, teachers are provided with professional development opportunities, such as lesson planning. As part of community engagement, it also allows the students' stories to be shared with parents. This provides learning resources not only for students, but also for teachers and parents, with the objective to provide young learners with a seamless and uninterrupted learning experience.



PROGRESS IN 2021

Increased Engagement through Digital Platforms

The Houbara Model aims to provide an integrated ecosystem that equips learners with: 21st-century skills. Advancements in technology have allowed us to introduce new skills and literacies into core subjects when being taught both in and beyond the classroom. We thus launched a number of new digital platforms in 2021 that enabled us to increase student engagement beyond the traditional classroom.



Centennial in Review

Launched to mark World Education Day, the *Centennial in Review* game provides a learning experience that reflects the first 50 years of successful conservation stories in the UAE while looking forward to the next 50. The game provides players with an interactive learning journey on current global sustainability issues that allows them to build connections across scientific concepts, actual occurrences and their real-life impacts. It has already been downloaded more than 5,000 times.



Journey of a Bird

In the digital game *Journey of a Bird*, students take on the role of an ecologist to explore the behaviour of the houbara while learning about mathematical, geographic and scientific concepts from the K-12 curriculum. By way of gamification, it provides a multidisciplinary approach to teaching through multiple levels sequenced to build an authentic storyline. It was designed with game schematics that are mapped to the national curriculum, with the learning experience integrated onto the MoE's online learning platform making it easily accessible to both students and teachers.

Expanding into the University Sector



International University Internships

Applying our approach beyond schools to universities provides new and additional opportunities for Emiratis at a more advanced level, thus enhancing our capabilities to achieve the ultimate success of developing tomorrow's conservationists. Following a pilot series, we extended our international internship programme. Emirati students in UAE universities were targeted through an awareness programme about the houbara species and their conservation, and during a series of detailed lectures, by leading scientists and researchers presented their scientific findings. This provided the opportunity to build on the pilot series towards internships and blended learning courses integrated into university programmes. In 2020, five students were engaged in this important initiative with Zayed University.



Writers' Workshop

In 2021, we launched a Writers' Workshop where university students from across the UAE were invited to participate in a two-part workshop to learn about the UAE's efforts in preserving wild species, most notably the houbara bustard, and the skillset required writing a short story. Twenty-seven students from 7 universities across the UAE took up our Short Story Challenge and participated in the workshops. From the eight finalists, three winners were chosen.



Expanding Work with our Education Partners

Working collaboratively with education partners enables us to reach wider audiences. We continuously work with the MoE to develop the Houbara Model within the UAE’s national curriculum, and especially the digital platform to make it accessible to students in every school in the country.



Emirates School Establishment (ESE)

This year we provided additional access for thousands of students via virtual workshops, the spring camp consisted of two virtual workshops for all school cycles where an ecologist from the IFHC discussed their work in the field. Almost 300 students participated in the workshop and 1,700 students took part in a competition about the workshop contents.

Furthermore, a winter camp comprised a Virtual Reading Comprehension Competition of 5,380 student participants. The competition involved asking students questions on one of the winners of the 15 stories competition (a national competition co-hosted by the IFHC and the MoE that saw the winning stories published in a book).



Al Ain Zoo

The houbara and Al Ain Zoo have a history that stretches back 50 years. It was here that Sheikh Zayed initiated Abu Dhabi’s efforts to conserve the species in the 1970s. The IFHC has maintained a long-standing relationship with the zoo, and held a winter camp for students from schools across the UAE in 2021. The two-day virtual workshop, which featured information about the houbara and the IFHC, and its methods of ecology, saw over 120 students participating from all school cycles.



Immersive Desert Survival Challenge

Together with our partner, Connect with Nature, we launched in 2020 the UAE’s first conservation-themed ‘3D Virtual Mobile Escape Room’. The Immersive Desert Survival Challenge offers youth an engaging new experience and learning opportunity through a series of exciting challenges. Launched to coincide with World Habitat Day, the game allows players to embark on a journey through the Arabian Desert, to survive the dangers of the sandy landscapes as they piece together a series of puzzles and riddles using cryptic clues. The all-new 3D virtual mobile escape room educates young people on the importance of conservation and the UAE’s rich natural heritage.

RECOGNITION: JACQUES RENAUD



جائزة
أبو ظبي
ABU DHABI
AWARDS

Jacques Renaud has been a friend of Abu Dhabi for many years. His passionate dedication to species conservation over 50 years has contributed greatly to securing a sustainable future for a variety of threatened animals.

In 2021, Jacques was honoured by HH Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, for his outstanding work to preserve the houbara bustard at the 10th Abu Dhabi Awards. During the ceremony, he was described as both a pioneer and a modern-day conservation icon for pre-emptive species conservation.

Jacques is the founder of Reneco International Wildlife Consultants, a partner of Abu Dhabi on its ground-breaking programme to conserve the houbara bustard. The pioneering work of Reneco under Jacques' leadership supported the vision of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, our Founding Father, to address declining numbers of houbara in the wild.



Consequently, the resulting captive breeding programme has now become a global leader in species conservation. It consists of four conservation centres, the National Avian Research Centre (NARC) in Sweihan, the Sheikh Khalifa Houbara Breeding Centre (SKHBC-AD) at Seih Al Salem (both in Abu Dhabi), the Emirates Center for Wildlife Propagation (ECWP) in Missouri/Enjil, Morocco, and the Sheikh Khalifa Houbara Breeding Centre Kazakhstan (SKHBC-KZ). Together, these centres have produced over half a million captive-bred houbara, the majority of which are used in conservation efforts in the wild in countries throughout the species' distribution range.

Citing the award, our Managing Director, HE Majid Al Mansouri, commended Jacques for pioneering the drive to secure a sustainable future for the houbara and called him a hero for vulnerable species whose work secured a future for such an emblematic bird.

Jacques passion and devotion extends to other species such as the white stork and birds of prey. As a skilled falconer, he recognised the decline of the species in the wild and became a champion for raptor conservation, as well as the houbara. His work in the global falconry community has helped protect Arabian falconry, ensuring that elements of our deep-rooted heritage and traditions prevail and enable the UAE's future generation to retain a crucial link to the country's past, and understand the important role of the houbara in the ecosystem.



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