



Abdel Fattah Nazmi Abd Rabou

Associate Professor, Biology Department
Islamic University of Gaza
Gaza Strip, Palestine

Middle East Fellowship on Environmental Education, New England, 2001

QLF Alumni Congress, Budapest, Hungary 2006

A pioneering wildlife specialist, Dr. Abdel Fattah Nazmi Abd Rabou has held a distinguished career in academia with a noted focus on Wildlife Ecology. Abdel Fattah explains that until recently, Most Palestinians had no knowledge of their environment or the use of terms like environment, ecology, wildlife, conservation, and biodiversity, because politics and violence overshadowed all else.

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Abdel Fattah earned a master's degree in Environmental Science from the University of Khartoum, Sudan in 1996. His research focused on the hazards of pesticides and insecticides. He then taught Environmental Science and Biology at the Islamic University of Gaza. In 2001, Abdel Fattah participated in the QLF Middle East Fellowship on Environmental Education. He learned about QLF from a colleague who encouraged him to apply. The QLF Fellowship, designed to share models of community-based conservation, inspired a shift in his research focus to wildlife ecology, and he thereby became the first wildlife specialist in Gaza.

Abdel Fattah began his Ph.D. in 2002 at Al-Neelain University in the Sudan. There he conducted an ecological survey of flora and fauna at the Wadi Gaza Nature Reserve. This research was inspired, in part, by his QLF experience, as well as the lack of specialists in his field (in Gaza) which rendered it "wide open." He attests there is no doubt the QLF program influenced this decision to pursue a Ph.D. on wildlife ecology and conservation.

Abdel Fattah became an Associate Professor of Environmental, Marine and Biological Sciences at the Islamic University of Gaza in 2012 after spending a 5-year period



Abdel Fattah is sitting on a termite mound in a forest lying in Ad Damazin, the capital of Blue Nile State in Sudan.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DR. SAKINA YAGI

as an Assistant Professor. While he currently works in the Biology Department, he has previously taught geography and engineering courses dealing with wildlife. In addition, Abdel Fattah has published over twenty-five academic articles, primarily on wildlife, zoology, and botany, and has published a book, *On the Ecology of Wadi Gaza, Gaza Strip: Survey and Assessment (Wildlife is Focused)*. In addition, he has written numerous environmental consulting reports, consisting mainly of baseline ecological surveys on topics such as sewage treatment works, solid waste management, desalination, coastal aquifer management programs, and the status of Wadi Gaza.

In reflecting on the influence of the QLF Fellowship, Abdel Fattah recalls a visit to a marine center in Boston where pre-school students learned about algae, fish, and molluscs, influencing their appreciation of the environment. In Gaza, young students, high school and university students are not offered studies on marine ecology despite access to beaches and coastal waters. Abdel Fattah's visit in New England encouraged his commitment to *inspire a deep appreciation of the environment and biodiversity.*

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During the QLF Fellowship, Abdel Fattah was inspired by the mutual respect among program participants, leading



Marine ecology fieldwork

PHOTOGRAPH BY MOHAMMED ABD RABOU

to dialogue, consensus building and collaboration. This informed his opinion that successful conservation requires working with people and communities. Furthermore, it necessitates sharing knowledge between communities and experts worldwide facing common environmental challenges. His belief in the necessity of sharing conservation knowledge and models led Abdel Fattah to travel extensively in the years following the Fellowship. He has since presented at conferences in Spain, Ukraine, Malta, Jordan, Palestine, and at the 2006 QLF *Alumni Congress* in Budapest, Hungary.

Abdel Fattah has expressed his appreciation to the QLF community, reflecting, *I cannot find the words to thank them all*. These relationships, based on respect, allow for open dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaboration across borders leading to hope and reconciliation. These principles are at the core of QLF's Middle East Program. 



A lesson in Middle East ornithology

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